



Family Deployment Supplement to the Connecticut Guardian

VOL. 4 NO. 10

HARTFORD, CT

OCTOBER 2003

AVCRAD families meet with TAG *Share dinner, laughs, tears and concerns*

SPEC. JESSE J. STANLEY
65TH PCH

Fears were put to rest, rumors dispelled and questions were answered by State Adjutant General Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno, about the deployment and hopefully soon return of the 1109th Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depot (AVCRAD) at a spaghetti dinner held by the general.

More than 100 family members gathered at the Groton AVCRAD to hear Cugno detail his visit to the Connecticut units deployed to Kuwait.

"We should be proud of the troops from Connecticut," said Cugno. "They have been outstanding."

The 1109th AVCRAD, who has been deployed since Feb. 3, 2003, has been responsible for the Theatre Aviation Maintenance Program (TAMP). This includes depot level maintenance and battle

damage assessment and recovery.

"The 1109th AVCRAD is extremely good at their job," said Cugno.

The gathered families shared dinner together as they watched a slide show of pictures of their loved ones in Kuwait. They also shared a similar question: when are they coming home?

According to the statements made by Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, this will be one year from their mobilization date.



Photos such as these were part of a slide show that families of deployed soldiers got to see during the AVCRAD family dinner held in August. (Photos courtesy of the 1109th AVCRAD, CTARNG)

Letters, small packages get to troops quicker

K.L. VANTRAN
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

The U.S. Postal Service and the Military Postal Service Agency process about 2 million pounds of mail a week for troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, and some items make it to the recipient faster than others, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Brian Lomax, agency chief of plans and policy, said here today.

Depending on where it originates, a letter or package spends "a couple of days" in the USPS system before it reaches either San Francisco or New York City, Lomax said. Then it travels another 16 to 19 hours by plane before landing in Kuwait or Bahrain. From there, it's picked up or delivered by motor vehicle.

Once in theater, a letter takes seven to 14 days to reach the service member, while a

package usually takes 14 to 24 days, Lomax added. Packages make up 90 percent of the mail.

"The mail is getting to the troops," he said. "The troops are happy. Our intent is to continue to make improvements and exceed their expectations."

Using automated mail scanning equipment and increasing the number of people working at mail facilities are two improvements that have speeded up mail delivery, Lomax said.

People who mail letters and packages also can help, he added. "The size of the package plays an important role," Lomax said. "Large packages take up a lot more room. If there's a choice between taking one large box or a lot of smaller boxes and letters, the large box will stay (at the mail facility). The ideal

size is a shoebox. It's also important to correctly address the package."

Aerosol cans, alcoholic beverages, ammunition, fireworks, flammable or explosive materials and illegal or infectious substances are among items that cannot be mailed to service members in Iraq and Afghanistan.

For more information, call 1-800-ASK-USPS or visit the USPS Web site [<http://www.usps.com>].

Though it's not one of the restricted items, Lomax recommends against sending chocolate. "Chocolate and 140 degrees makes chocolate paste," he said.

Cookies and sunflower seeds seem to travel well, he added, and placing cookies in a coffee can helps to protect them.

Heat also takes its toll on the tape used in packaging, Lomax said. The USPS Web site

states a clear or brown packaging tape, reinforced packing tape or paper tape is best.

Cord, string and twine should not be used, because they can get caught in the mail processing equipment.

Service members love to get mail, Lomax continued. "When I was out at sea, it was always a joy to get a letter from home or a copy of a report card. It's an exhilarating feeling: 'I'm out here doing my job, and they haven't forgotten who I am.'"

Lomax said the mail system's success is a result of the joint effort of the USPS and his agency.

"We have motivated soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who are committed to doing their job to make sure the mail gets to the troops," he said.

Deployed troops get break on school loans

K.L. VANTRAN
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

Military personnel who have been deployed or mobilized are not required to make student loan payments during their absences.

Federal regulations require lenders to postpone the student loan program payments of active duty military personnel. This applies to members of the National Guard and Ready Reserves who have been called to active duty, as well as to active duty personnel whose duty station has been changed as a result of a military mobilization.

"Many of the brave men and women serving our nation right now have put their personal lives on hold to answer the nation's call to duty," said U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige in a news release earlier this year. "As they defend the freedoms we cherish, our soldiers should not have to worry about their student loan obligations and resuming their studies."

He encouraged the higher education and lending communities to be flexible and provide assistance to service members, so they can "easily resume their studies and financial obligations after they complete their tours of duty."

The regulations apply to student loans made under the Federal Family Education Loan, William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan and Federal Perkins Loan programs.

The law also requires that active duty military people who have not begun the repayment period on their loans continue to receive a grace period (generally six months) before repaying their loans. Students who were in school at the time of mobilization must also be given a reasonable period to resume school before lenders request payments.

Colleges will not be required to collect financial aid funds that now-active duty students were given to pay for books and living expenses. Additionally, Education Department officials encourage colleges and universities to either fully refund tuition and other institutional charges or give comparable credit against future charges to students forced to withdraw from school to fulfill their military obligations.

Additional information is available by calling 1-800-433-3243 or visiting the Department of Education Web site [http://www.ifap.ed.gov].



Handyperson Hotline for families and volunteers

Calling all soldiers and airmen, retirees or spouses. This is your opportunity to stop being a spectator and start doing something to help the Connecticut Army and Air National Guard during these unprecedented times.

Volunteer to donate some of your time and expertise to the CTNG Family Program's Handyperson Center. If you are a tradesman or an all around handyperson or a laborer, the Handyperson Center is looking for you!

E-mail your name, phone number skill, status (active, retired, spouse) and hometown to Sgt. Maj. Toby Cormier at toby.cormier@ct.ngb.army.mil or call (860) 209-0770.

The Handyperson Hotline is designed to reduce the stressors on the families of deployed soldiers and airmen by having everyday household problems diagnosed and repaired or referred to competent businesses at no cost for labor.

The program is also designed to get seasonal chores such as window air conditioners installed/removed, pools

opened/closed, leaves removed, items brought to the dump and so on.

All of this can be performed by fellow Guardsmen, retirees or spouses of Guardsmen who are willing to donate their time and expertise to this program.

Here's how the program works:

A deployed family member calls the Handyperson Hotline with a clogged drain.

The Hotline manager contacts a plumber from the Handyperson Database who will contact the family member and attempt to walk the person through correcting the problem (if possible.)

If not corrected, the Hotline will dispatch a qualified person (fellow Guardsman) to the house to correct the problem.

It is designed to give the deployed family somewhere to turn to keep the home operating smoothly without having to pay to get things done around the house that were normally done by the deployed soldier or airman.

To volunteer or for more information, call (860) 209-0770 today.

FOR SOLDIERS AND THEIR FAMILIES QUICK REFERENCE SHEET CRITICAL INFORMATION

The Connecticut National Guard Family Program Office will function as your Family Assistance Center (FAC) during deployment. Additionally, personnel at the activity identified below are available to assist you as well.

Army address _____ Army Phone Number _____ Fax _____
Unit POC Name _____ Email _____
Each unit also has a Family Readiness Group (FRG).
Lead Volunteer _____ Phone Number _____ Email _____

Connecticut National Guard Family Program Office - 555 Wiland Avenue, Bldg. 2W, Newington, CT 06111
1-800-888-2677
Mrs. Kimberly Hoffman, Coordinator

Red Cross

1-877-372-7337 - Emergency
www.redcross.org - Other Red Cross services are described in the web site.
Family members can call this number to send emergency messages to a service member. You will need to have the soldier's full name, rank, social security number, branch of service, military unit and installation.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)

860-421-5953 - CCL Vendors
1-800-534-4596 - National Office
www.esgr.com and www.esgr.org
This program has an Ombudsman who provides informal resolution for employees and their Guard/Reserve employees. Call them if you have questions regarding your job rights.

TRICARE

1-888-969-5386
www.tricare.mil
Call for all healthcare questions and issues.

Military Pay

860-514-4856/7 - Hartford Pay Branch
1-888-PA-Y-ARMY - Automated pay info line
1-866-390-2348 - P24 questions/problems Turn-Turn EIT
www.dfas.mil

Chaplain

Referrals are available through the Family Program Office.

JAG

860-540-3283
LTC Lippincott & CPT Tancos

ID Cards/IDERS

860-878-8713, 6735, 6727, 6728
CTNG Soldier-Airman Support Center
555 Wiland Avenue, Bldg. 2W, Newington, CT 06111

IMPORTANT SERVICE MEMBER INFO

Service member full name _____

Rank/Grade _____ SSN _____

Company/Unit _____

Component _____

Installation/Address _____

Email _____

**SERGEANT MAJOR
TOBY P. CORMIER**
Ph: 860-441-2984
Cell: 860-209-0770
toby.cormier@ct.ngb.army.mil

Officials set holiday mailing dates, policies

STAFF SGT. C. TODD LOPEZ
AIR FORCE PRINT NEWS

The dates for mailing items to and from overseas locations in time for the holidays are fast approaching, and Military Postal Service Agency officials have suggestions for ensuring packages and letters arrive on time.

In fact, customers who mail early may save money and still have an on-time delivery, said Mark J. DeDomenic, chief of operations at the agency.

"As we get closer to Christmas, the mail volumes get higher, and therefore mail takes longer to be delivered," he said.

The recommended mail deadlines for sending mail

from the United States to all overseas military mailing addressees for the holidays are:

- Parcel post: Nov. 13
- Space-available mail: Nov. 28
- Parcel-airlift mail: Dec. 4
- Priority and first-class letters or cards: Dec. 11

DeDomenic said these dates can also be observed by customers sending mail from overseas locations to the United States.

Customs forms are required on all international mail, and shipments should be properly packaged before sending them overseas, DeDomenic said.

"Customers should always remember to ensure they package their parcels in strong boxes and use a lot of packing material,"

DeDomenic said. "Popcorn or newspaper

makes for great packaging material."

He also suggested customers use a nylon-fiber reinforced tape to bundle up their packages.

"Keep in mind that packages going to military addresses overseas are handled many times and travel long distances. Therefore strong boxes and good internal packing is important," DeDomenic said.

While the United States has restrictions on mailing items such as poisons and

weapons, other countries have their own restrictions for what can be mailed, DeDomenic said. Postal customers need to consider the length of the journey overseas and the final destination when

considering what to send.

"I would advise customers to not mail perishable items and to ensure they do not mail things such as batteries, hazardous materials or weapons," DeDomenic said. "Items such as coffee or tobacco are restricted to certain locations. If there is any doubt as to the mailability of particular items, customers should always check with their local post office."

Because of security restrictions, mass-mailing operations such as Operation Dear Abby or the "Any Servicemember" mailing program are not being supported by the agency, DeDomenic said.

Postal agency officials encourage servicemembers to support the publicly available Web sites that allow the American public to write supportive letters to them.





Bristol Family Assistance Center October Events

2 Oct 03: An evening with a comedian, Trudy Kaufman/Spouses and Significant Others of deployed military
6:00-8:00 Bristol Army

7 Oct 03: Truly will generate discussion on the emotional stages of deployment. It is an opportunity for you to discuss your feelings with other people who are in the same situation.
* Due to adult content of discussion we are requesting that children do not attend this event. If there is an issue please let Lieutenant Holsberry know.

14 Oct 03: Apple Picking at Lyman Orchards
11:00 am - The price of admission will depend upon the number attending as being a friend and enjoy the apple-chopped corn meal and contact fresh apples. This is a provide your own transportation event. Please RSVP before October 1.
* Due to adult content of discussion we are requesting that children do not attend this event. If there is an issue please let Lieutenant Holsberry know.

14 Oct 03: 142nd MP Family Readiness Group at Waterbury Army
7:00 pm at the Waterbury Army
We have several projects in the works... Scrapbooks, Welcome Home quilts, Halloween Trick-treats, Fundraisers... Help us keep the momentum going.

14 Oct 03: An evening with a comedian, Trudy Kaufman/Parents of deployed soldiers
6:00-8:00 Bristol Army
Trudy will generate discussion on the emotional stages of deployment. It is an opportunity for you to discuss your feelings with other people who are in the same situation.
* Due to adult content of discussion we are requesting that children do not attend this event. If there is an issue please let Lieutenant Holsberry know.

18 Oct 03: An evening with a comedian, Trudy Kaufman/Spouses and Significant Others of deployed military
6:00-8:00 Bristol Army

18 Oct 03: An evening with a comedian, Trudy Kaufman at the Norwich Army
6:00-8:00 Norwich Army

18 Oct 03: Meeting with Co-Chair Trudy Kaufman at the Waterbury Army
1:00 pm at the Waterbury Army
This meeting is open to everyone in the area.

21 Oct 03: 142nd MP Family Readiness Group at Waterbury Army
7:00 pm at the Waterbury Army
Help us plan the next few events and fundraisers.

21 Oct 03: 142nd MP Family Readiness Group at Waterbury Army
7:00 pm at the Waterbury Army
Help us plan the next few events and fundraisers.

24 Oct 03: Phantom of the Opera Trip
*See attached flyer. RSVP's must be by 19 Oct 03.

25 Oct 03: Meeting with Trudy Kaufman for Children
Bristol Army - 9:30-11:30 for ages 4-14 years old
10:30-11:30 for ages 14-18 years old
Trudy will help the children discuss their feelings. Please RSVP as we have an idea how many to expect. We will have some Halloween-themed projects to entertain the children and a separate room available for the parents.



COMMISSARY & EXCHANGE DIRECTORY

Here is a current directory of area commissaries and exchanges along with their phone numbers. Always call ahead to verify hours as they may change without notice. A valid i.d. card is necessary to use these facilities. Contact your unit administrator if you or your dependants need a card. If you have trouble, contact the State Family Program Office at 1-800-858-2677.

AIR NATIONAL GUARD

East Granby
TUESDAY - FRIDAY:
10:00 - 5:00
SATURDAY: 10:00 - 4:00
SUNDAY & MONDAY: Closed
UTAs: Open Saturday &
Sunday: 10:00 - 5:00
Phone: (860) 653-6994

COAST GUARD ACADEMY

New London
MONDAY - FRIDAY:
9:00 - 5:00
SATURDAY: 9:00 - 3:00
SUNDAY: Closed
Phone: (860) 444-8488

CAMP ROWLAND POST EXCHANGE

MONDAY: Closed
TUESDAY - SATURDAY:
10:00 - 5:00
SUNDAY: 10:00 - 4:00
Phone: (860) 739-9672

COAST GUARD STATION

120 Woodward Avenue
New Haven, CT
MONDAY - FRIDAY:
9:00 - 4:30
SATURDAY: 9:00 - 2:00
SUNDAY: Closed
Phone: (203) 468-2712

WEST POINT, NEW YORK

Exchange Hours:
SATURDAY - WEDNESDAY:
10:00 - 6:00
THURSDAY & FRIDAY:
10:00 - 7:00
Phone: (914) 446-5406
Commissary Hours:
MONDAY: Closed
TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY:
10:00 - 6:00
THURSDAY: 10:00 - 7:00
FRIDAY: 10:00 - 6:00
SATURDAY: 9:00 - 5:00
SUNDAY: 11:00 - 5:00
Phone: (914) 446-5406

SUB BASE, NEW LONDON

Exchange Hours:
MON., TUES., WED.,
FRI.: 9:00 - 6:00
THURSDAY: 9:00 - 7:00
SATURDAY & SUNDAY:
9:00 - 5:00
HOLIDAYS: 9:00 - 4:00
Phone: (860) 694-3811
Commissary Hours:
MONDAY: Closed
TUE., WED. & FRI.: 9:00 - 6:00
THURSDAY: 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
SATURDAY: 8:00 - 5:00
SUNDAY: 10:00 - 5:00
Phone: (860) 694-2244

WESTOVER AIR FORCE BASE

Chicopee, Mass.
MONDAY - FRIDAY: 10:00 - 5:00
SATURDAY: 10:00 - 5:00
SUNDAY: 11:00 - 5:00
Phone: (413) 593-5583

ARMY RESERVE CENTER

700 South Quaker Lane
West Hartford, CT
MONDAY - FRIDAY:
10:00 - 1:00
MONDAY - FRIDAY:
1:45-4:00
SATURDAY & SUNDAY: Closed
Phone: (860) 236-3393

Family Assistance Center locations

Family Assistance Centers are set-up in the following armories around the state:

Bristol Armory
61 Center Street, Bristol, CT 06010
(860) 582-1206 Toll Free 866-347-2283 1st Lt. Lynda Hedenberg

Waterbury Armory
64 Field Street, Waterbury, CT 06702
(203) 574-2406 Toll Free 866-347-2291 Sgt. Jonathon Duffy

Manchester Armory
330 Main Street, Manchester, CT 06040
(860) 646-0780 Toll Free 866-347-2286 Capt. Lauri Tinelle

Windsor Locks, AASF
Bradley International ARPT-BLDG 85-152, Route 75, Windsor Locks, CT 06096
(860) 627-7942 Toll Free 866-347-2292

Groton - AVCRAD
71 Tower Avenue, Groton, CT 06340
(860) 448-3346 Toll Free 866-347-3346 Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Ives

103rd FW, Bradley ANG Base
Bldg 8, East Granby, CT 06026
(860) 292-2730 Mrs. Donna Rivera

Newington SASC
555 Willard Avenue, Building 2W, Newington, CT 06111
(860) 878-6723 (860) 878-6724 Toll Free 800-858-2677
Mrs. Kim Hoffman, Spec. Jessica McKenna and Staff Sgt. Christopher McCarty

Branford Armory
87 Montowese Street, Branford, CT 06405
(203) 481-3874 Toll Free 866-347-3351 Sgt. 1st Class Cheryl Gilbert

Stratford Armory
63 Amory Road, Stratford, CT 06614
(203) 375-8269 Toll Free 866-347-3356 Spec. Tanara Jex

Middletown Armory
200 Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457
(860) 344-9201 Toll Free 866-347-3355 Ms. Michelle McIntosh

Norwich Armory
38 Stott Avenue, Norwich, CT 06360
(860) 887-3911 Toll Free 866-347-3357

103rd Air Control Squadron
206 Boston Post Road, Orange, CT 06477
(203) 795-2983 Charlie and Jane Solomon

Volunteers are needed in each facility,.
Those wishing to help out can contact Mrs. Kim Hoffman, Family Program Manager
at 1-800-858-2677.

Any family member or loved one of a deployed soldier who has questions about
benefits or deployment issues may also get answers to their question at the following
email addresses: kim.hoffman@ct.ngb.army.mil or julian.muller@ct.ngb.army.mil

School Unscramble

Unscramble the words below:

1. dunplgrayo _____
2. olscoh _____
3. etehrac _____
4. nearigd _____
5. empbSeetr _____
6. eecsr _____
7. nlegainr _____
8. morwheok _____
9. kcbacpka _____
10. hamt _____

Kids' CreativeCorner

A MONTHLY FEATURE
OF FUN AND
EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Write two sentences using the words above:

Answers: playground, school, teacher, reading, September, recess, learning, homework, backpack, math